Chapter 1: Summary

This Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) is a project-level document that supplements the *City of Redmond Comprehensive Plan Environmental Impact Statement* (City of Redmond, 1995) and is part of a phased review under the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). This SEIS has been prepared in accordance with applicable requirements of SEPA and its implementing regulations.

The Draft SEIS was released for agency and public review on March 31, 2004. Comments on the Draft SEIS were accepted until May 7, 2004. A public information meeting on the Draft SEIS was held on April 19, 2004 at the Redmond Senior Center, 8703 160th Avenue NE, Redmond, from 6:30 to 9:00 PM. Forty-nine people signed in for the meeting. City and consultant staff presented the results of the traffic and environmental analyses and discussed the impacts of each alternative. A question and answer period followed. Although the meeting did not follow a formal public hearing format, a court reporter was available to transcribe comments. Appendix A includes the official Notice of Availability, all advertisements, and a transcript of the meeting. The transcript includes the presentation, questions and responses, and additional comments given directly to the court reporter at the meeting.

This Final SEIS discusses substantive comments received on the Draft SEIS and provides responses to those comments. Several comments from the public prompted the City to conduct additional investigations of wildlife habitat in the project area, and this document presents the results of these investigations. The Final SEIS also presents the Preferred Alternative and lists mitigation commitments.

The following Purpose and Need, Description of Proposed Action, and Alternatives sections are unchanged from what was presented in the Draft SEIS. The cost estimates for the various alternatives are also unchanged.

Purpose and Need

The City of Redmond proposes to extend Bear Creek Parkway from its current western terminus at Leary Way to Redmond Way, at a location between 159th Place NE and 161st Avenue NE (Figure 1.1). The extension of Bear Creek Parkway has been a planned link in the Redmond street network for many years. It is listed in the *Redmond Comprehensive Plan* (RCP) as a needed project.

The recently completed *Downtown Transportation Master Plan* (DTMP, 2002) also identified the Bear Creek Parkway Extension as an important link in the Downtown street network. The DTMP's goal is to develop a transportation concept for Downtown Redmond that enhances mobility and economic vitality, maintains a people-friendly environment, and enhances the area for bicycles and pedestrians. This involves reducing the amount of through traffic in Downtown to improve circulation and access.

The DTMP culminated in an Action Agenda for Implementation, which outlines specific projects needed to achieve the Downtown Redmond vision. One of the DTMP's goals is to provide better Downtown connections, including conversion of Redmond Way and Cleveland Street to two-way operations, the addition of roadway connections across the BNSF Railroad corridor, and completion of the east-west Bear Creek Parkway connection. Because some aspects of the Action Agenda depend on completion of the Bear Creek Parkway connection, the City Council elected to study this connection as the first project.

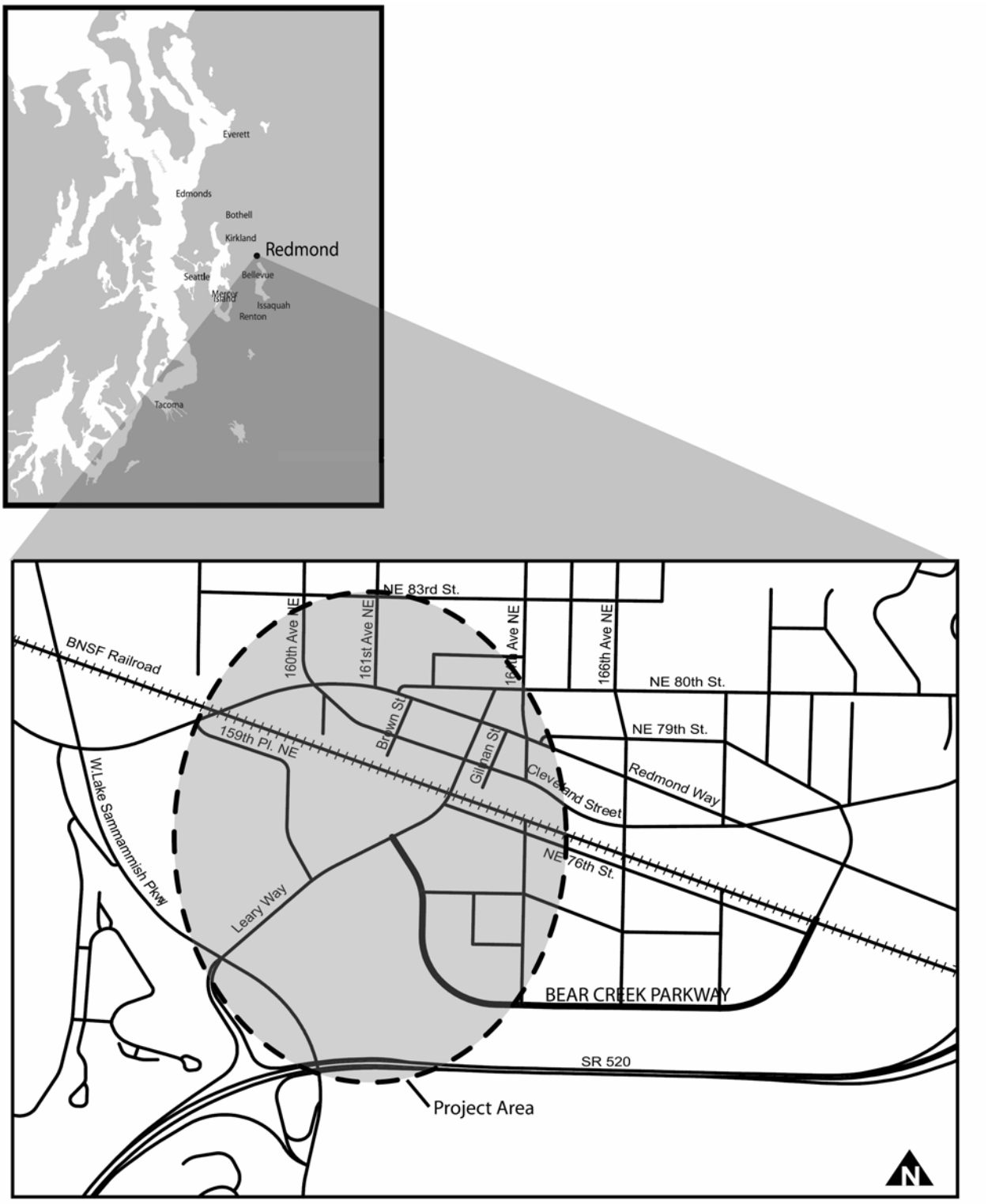


Figure 1.1: Project Vicinity

A primary function of the proposed Bear Creek Extension will be to provide an additional connection for east-west traffic traveling through Downtown Redmond. Population and traffic in Redmond and the surrounding area is expected to increase substantially in the next 20 years. By providing an additional east-west route, Redmond Way and Cleveland Street will be able to serve more local uses including bus, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic. The extension of Bear Creek Parkway also provides an opportunity to enhance north-south connections in Downtown.

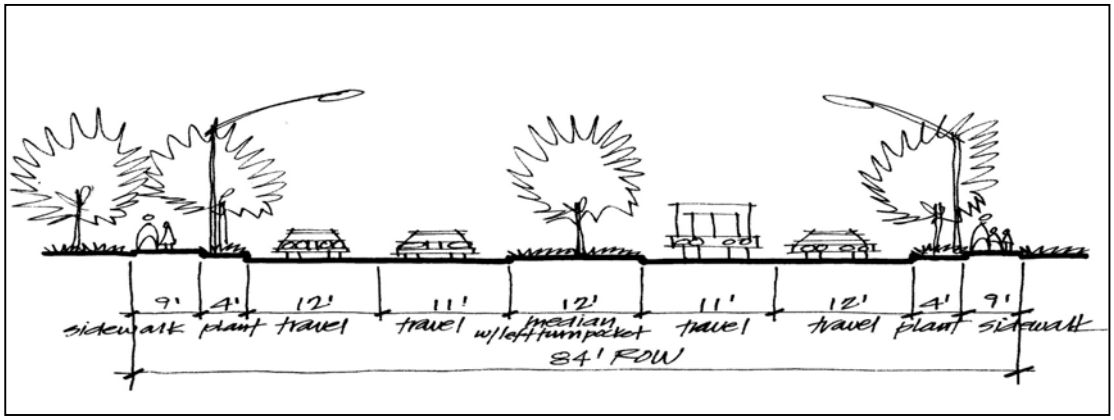
Other benefits of implementing the proposed facility include:

- Increasing the Downtown street network's connectivity so that motor vehicle circulation and access within Downtown are improved, strengthening this area as a local and regional destination;
- Strengthening travel connections between Old Town and Redmond Town Center in the interest of increasing Downtown's commercial synergy and economic vitality;
- Improving public transit (bus) access and circulation to and within Downtown to support a higher transit mode share, thereby growing ridership and encouraging increased King County Metro and Sound Transit service levels;
- Improving connections to and within the Downtown area for pedestrians and bicycles, in support of increased walking and bicycling activity so the area is strengthened economically and made more attractive as a destination;
- Protecting and enhancing Redmond's unique community character, as expressed in its Downtown urban design, architecture and physical setting;
- Preserving the elements of Downtown that are important to Redmond's image and legacy as a "green city" with abundant trees, open space, wildlife, clean air and good water quality;
- Providing a new, attractive gateway to the Downtown area; and
- Encouraging development and redevelopment of Downtown in a manner consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Description of the Proposed Action

The Bear Creek Parkway Extension project would construct a new four- to five-lane roadway between the western end of the existing Bear Creek Parkway and Redmond Way (see Figure 1.2 for a typical cross-section layout). The roadway would consist of a single 11-foot inside driving lane in each direction and a single 12-foot outside driving lane in each direction. A 12-foot left-turn lane would be provided at all intersections. A 13-foot sidewalk/landscaping area is planned for both sides of the roadway. The total section width would be 84 feet, except at intersections where additional turn-lanes may add additional width to the roadway. No bicycle lanes are proposed, in accordance with the Bicycle Network Concept. This Concept, developed as part of the Downtown Transportation Master Plan (DTMP), includes conversion of the BNSF Railroad corridor to include a multi-use trail to carry most east-west bicycle traffic through Downtown. Sidewalks and crosswalks would accommodate pedestrians at all major intersections. A stormwater drainage system would also be constructed as part of the project. This system would include the addition of new storm drains and wet ponds and a new outfall to the Sammamish River.

Figure 1.2: Bear Creek Parkway Extension – Typical Section



Alternatives

The EIS evaluated four build alternatives and the No Action Alternative. The alternatives all incorporate the typical section shown in Figure 1.2 and vary primarily in their alignment. Following the descriptions of alternatives, Table 1.1 presents the costs for each alternative

No Action

The No Action Alternative would maintain the Bear Creek Parkway's existing configuration.

Alternative 1

Alternative 1 would provide a new connection, beginning at the Bear Creek Parkway/164th Avenue NE intersection on the south side of Town Center and connecting to 159th Place NE at Leary Way. 159th Place NE between Leary Way and Redmond Way would be realigned and reconstructed to provide an additional lane in each direction. Leary Way between 159th Place NE and West Lake Sammamish Parkway would be widened to the south by one lane, to accommodate the new Bear Creek Parkway/Leary Way intersection.

Alternative 2

Alternative 2 would provide a new connection beginning at the Bear Creek Parkway/NE 74th Street intersection at the entrance to Town Center. This new roadway would be aligned just northeast of the existing 162nd Avenue NE alignment and would curve around to the west, running parallel to and south of the BNSF Railroad corridor. 159th Place NE would be partially reconstructed to add an additional lane in each direction.

Alternative 3

Alternative 3 would provide a new connection beginning at the Bear Creek Parkway/NE 74th Street intersection and would run generally north, crossing the BNSF railroad corridor and Cleveland Street and connecting to Redmond Way at 161st Avenue NE. New intersections would be created at Bear Creek Parkway and Cleveland Street and a southern leg would be added to the 161st Avenue NE/Redmond Way intersection.

Alternative 4 (Preferred)

Alternative 4 is a hybrid of Alternatives 2 and 3, and would provide an east-west connection to Redmond Way and a northern connection to 161st Ave. NE. Alternative 4 is the Preferred Alternative, because it best meets the project purpose of providing an alternate east-west connection and achieving other goals such as increased Downtown connectivity and improved traffic circulation.

Table 1.1: Costs

Alternative	Cost (2003 dollars in millions)
No Action	
Alternative 1	$30.1
Alternative 2	$27.2
Alternative 3	$25.3
Alternative 4	$34.8

These costs include design, right-of-way, earthwork, structures, pavement, drainage, utility work, traffic control, environmental mitigation, and contingencies. These costs will be further developed as the project moves into design and construction.

Selection of a Preferred Alternative

The process through which the Preferred Alternative was selected involved several meetings with Redmond City Council to present information and answer questions. Four meetings were held on the following dates:

- May 11, 2004
- May 25, 2004
- June 29, 2004
- July 20, 2004

Each meeting was recorded and broadcast on Redmond's local access cable channel. Discussion centered on the benefits and impacts of the No Action and each of the four build alternatives. At the Council's request, a meeting with Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WADFW) and the East Lake Washington Audubon Society was held on June 15, 2004 to further discuss the impacts of each alternative on herons and other wildlife. Section 2 presents the results of this meeting. Appendix B contains copies of all presentations and handouts given to Council to help them select the Preferred Alternative.

All Council members agreed that an extension of Bear Creek Parkway is necessary to achieve the City's goals for Downtown, including encouraging redevelopment and economic revitalization, providing an alternate route for east-west traffic, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment in the Downtown core, and converting the Redmond-Cleveland couplet back to two-way operations serving primarily local traffic. Most Council members felt that Alternative 4 best met the project's stated goals, so it was chosen as the Preferred Alternative. Impacts to the environment were considered manageable with the various mitigation measures discussed in the Draft SEIS. See Section 4 for a list of the City's commitments to minimizing impacts through the project's design and construction.

Schedule and Phasing

The schedule for design and construction of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension will be determined in the context of implementing the Downtown Transportation Master Plan. The Bear Creek Parkway Extension is just one of a suite of projects planned for Downtown Redmond, and is one of several projects planned for Bear Creek Parkway. The decision on when to implement the Bear Creek Parkway Extension depends on the priorities for these other projects, including improvements to the east end of Bear Creek Parkway at Redmond Way. Once a timeline and funding source(s) for the project have been identified, the following steps will occur (generally in order of occurrence):

- Preliminary design of the roadway
- Additional environmental investigations, as required
- Acquisition of necessary right-of-way
- Final design of the roadway
- Development of traffic and construction phasing plans
- Construction phase permitting
- Construction

Completing preliminary design will provide more specific information on the amount and location of right-of-way required, which may reduce the amount of needed right-of-way from what is shown in the SEIS. Chapter 4 details the City's commitments to mitigate environmental impacts during the design and construction phases. If significant changes to the project proposal or the affected environment as they are discussed in this SEIS occur prior to implementation, the City will complete supplemental environmental documentation.

Due to the complexity and cost of the Bear Creek Parkway Extension project, the City Council and the public have expressed interest in phasing the construction of the project. Phasing essentially involves constructing the project in stages, depending on the need for certain project components and particularly on funding availability. The Bear Creek Parkway Extension project does lend itself to phasing opportunities, which will be more fully explored during project design. Phasing opportunities could include phasing the full width of the roadway; beginning with a reduced roadway section (i.e. three lanes vs. five lanes) and eventually building the full five-lane section. This type of phasing could be feasible given that Bear Creek Parkway currently has a three-lane section. The phasing to five lanes could occur in conjunction with the additional lane improvements planned for the existing Bear Creek Parkway. However, because the analyses presented in the SEIS assumed a five-lane section on both the existing Bear Creek Parkway and the extension, additional traffic analyses would be required to determine the feasibility of constructing only three lanes.

Another opportunity for phasing exists in the configuration of the Preferred Alternative and its east-west and north-south components. Because the east-west component is most directly related to the project's purpose and need, this section could be constructed first, and the north-south portions could be constructed at a later time. The impacts of constructing the east-west portion only are known, as this was analyzed as Alternative 2 in the SEIS. This first phase would provide some benefit until the full project could be constructed.